

PO Box 344
Kotzebue AK
(907) 442-6034

Fall 2003



BY RUTH ITEN

Iten Kennels

Iditarod 2004

Dear Friends,

Ed is home training this fall. We've been taking small teams out on training runs across the tundra. The tussoks provide great early season training—the dogs build serious muscles fast by working their way across the bumpy tundra.

It's mid-November and we still don't have much snow but the dog miles are building. The guys put in the shee fish nets just last week and the team is busy now pulling home their dinner.

Last year proved to be every bit as exciting as we had hoped. Our local races went well and the dogs performed to their top capacity.

Our Iditarod finish was our best yet and Ed's race was the smoothest he's had despite the Fairbanks start and no snow in Anchorage.

Our yearlings ran the juniors races and kept Ruth and the children in transportation all winter. And Tollef came in second in the Kobuk 440 besides winning the Humanitarian Award.

We are anticipating another successful race season

this year and we're looking forward to being in contact with every one of you.

Without you last year wouldn't have been the success it was, and *without you* we just couldn't do it again this year.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter.

Thank you for everything and God bless,

*Ed and Ruth,
Katie and Quinn*



Tollef's 440 Trophy by Vika Owens

Lucky Number 9

It was getting late in the evening at the Iditarod Drawing last February at the Sullivan Arena—probably close to ten. Ed, myself and our friends from Lynden, HWatt and Scott and Prime Mechanical had been there since seven enjoying the each other's company.

Ed's name still hadn't been called. We listened for the next musher's name. Bob Barndt broke a smile, Glenn Watts gave a thumbs up - it wasn't Ed. The longer we waited for Ed's number to be called the closer to the front of the pack he'd leave the starting line in Fairbanks.

The team's #9 starting position did make a difference. The dogs didn't travel in the heat of the day at the ceremonial start in Anchorage and they got an early start and a fresh trail out of Fairbanks.

"There's still a lot of room for improvement," Ed is quoted in his post race inter-

view with our local newspaper, James Mason from the Arctic Sounder

"His dogs were not afflicted with the virus that slowed many of the teams in the race this year."

"They were relatively healthy the whole Iditarod," Iten said. "But we went out and raced early in the season. We went to Kusko and got sick dogs after that, so that helped us out, I think. I think that's part of the reason to race around early in the season."

"Iten did have problems with younger dogs not being sturdy enough to handle high speeds over the entire length of the race. His team included five dogs under three years of age."

"They need to be three-and-a-half before they are rock-solid," Iten said. In pre-race training he lost four key dogs, three of them to Achilles tendon injuries. That left him

running more young dogs than he would have liked.

"But it worked out pretty well," he said. "I was real happy with the way they ate. They were real healthy the whole race."

"Iten started slow and finished strong, moving up the list rapidly the last three days. "I had lost time early on," he said. "I sprung some leaks with the young dogs. They got sore wri-sed and I wanted to keep them in the team, so it took more time to rest them. I kind of nursed them along for the next week. But the end result was that I wasn't able to keep any of them to the finish." *From the Arctic Sounder, April 3, 2003.*

Ed finished #9 in the 2003 Iditarod. There is a third reason why nine is his lucky number. Ed's birthday is March 9.

Lucky guy.

Iten Kennels Newsletter, Fall 2003, p.2

Pups

Ed continues to devote himself to his breeding program. As soon as he comes home from the Iditarod he's got the pedigree papers out, planning who will get bred this year.

We've introduced some new lines over the past two years by partnering with Dan Huttenen's kennel in Knik. You'll be seeing more white dogs at the start. Hoover, Bunting and Cool are three white two year olds who you might meet this year. Hoover and Bunting led as yearlings for Kate in the junior races last year.

My favorite litter this summer was the five brown pups sired by Ed's leader PeeWee. The four males and one female pups are clones of their dad. Their dispositions are gentle, their legs long and their faces full of expression. That's them in the picture on this page. Quinn built them a puppy palace last June.



Ed and team leaving Nulato



Ms. Pres

"Hey Ms. Pres," Syrus Harris, Kotzebue Dog Musher Association 8 Dog Race Marshall and long time board member greeted me on a clear cold morning out on the ice in front of town last January. All I could do was smile and answer, "I'll try."

After fifteen years of KDMA membership I was elected to the board two years ago. Then after the annual meeting last January I found myself elected President of the Association.

You have heard me speak highly of all the board members, race marshals and trail judges who make our full schedule of eight dog, open class sprint, junior and mid-distance races possible. I thank each one of these people for putting up with my questions and blunders as President last season and I look forward to a successful race season again this year.

Kobuk 440

All winter long we planned to have two teams in the Kobuk 440, one for Ed and one for Tollef. As the race approached and the training miles increased we found it was just too fast a race for the yearlings to enter.

So Tollef got to take the main team comprised of some Iditarod dogs and some two year olds. He ran a great race, so good that he received the Humanitarian Award. He came in second with a time of 72:20:37, 1 hour 50 minutes behind first place finisher Jeff King.



Quinn with PeeWee's Pups

MEYLA

Come about mid-April Sneka, our mare, started looking large and questions started to arise around the dinner table. By June she was too large to ride so Ed made a call. Our vet, Phil Meyer, informed Ed that horses can conceive right after they give birth. No wonder the stallion, Rhiner, who is now a gelding, had been hanging around Sneka after Indy's birth the previous July. So we watched and waited. By mid-July we thought she would burst she was so large. We hated to leave on July 22 with Sneka still huge but it was time to go to fish camp. The night after we came back in the fall Sneka came into the corral followed by a foal. I snuck up on her and looked real hard. Yes! A Filly! We named her Melya, little girl in Icelandic.